

Appl. No.: 09/932,779
Amdt. Dated December 11, 2003
Reply to Office Action of November 10, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of fabricating a fixture having a seamless depression capable of holding a liquid, utilizing a thermoforming process, said method comprising the steps of:

a) placing a single sheet, having predetermined outer dimensions, of heated, malleable, solid surface material in a vacuum mold having a cavity with inner dimensions, said outer dimensions of said single sheet of material being greater than said inner dimensions of said cavity;

b) creating a vacuum within the vacuum mold ~~in order to deform~~ capable of solely deforming the material into a shape having a substantially seamless three-dimensional depression or projection capable of holding a liquid;

c) allowing the deformed material of step (b) to cool to a substantially rigid shape; and

d) removing the substantially rigidly shaped material from said vacuum mold.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the vacuum created in step (b) deforms the solid surface material to substantially its final shape.

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Claim 3 (currently amended): The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said deformed material comprises a flange portion, and wherein the method further comprises the step of:

e) constraining the material about said flange portion by means of a retaining ring prior to and during said vacuum creating step (b).

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said solid surface material comprises acrylic plastic.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said solid surface material comprises acrylic plastic and approximately between 20 and 85 percent aluminum trihydrate filler by weight.

Claim 6 (original): The method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising the step of:

e) bonding said rigidly shaped material of step (d) to another component.

Claim 7 (original): The method in accordance with claim 6, wherein said another component comprises one of the group: countertop, curb, other assembly feature.

Claims 8 - 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (currently amended): A method of fabricating a fixture having a seamless depression capable of holding a liquid, utilizing a thermoforming process, said method comprising the steps of:

a) sizing a single sheet of solid surface material having predetermined outer dimensions;

b) heating and placing said sized, single sheet of solid surface material of step (a) in a vacuum mold having a cavity with inner dimensions, said outer dimensions of said single sheet of material being greater than said inner dimensions of said cavity;

c) creating a vacuum within the vacuum mold ~~in order to deform~~ capable of solely deforming the material into a shape having a substantially seamless three-dimensional depression or projection capable of holding a liquid;

d) allowing the deformed material of step (c) to cool to a substantially rigid shape; and

e) removing the substantially rigidly shaped material from said vacuum mold.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The method in accordance with claim 12, wherein the vacuum created in step (c) deforms the solid surface material to substantially its final shape.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method in accordance with claim 12, wherein said deformed material comprises a flange portion, and wherein the method further comprises the step of:

f) constraining the material about said flange portion by means of a retaining ring, prior to and after said vacuum creating step (c).

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Claim 15 (previously presented): The method in accordance with claim 12, wherein said solid surface material comprises acrylic plastic.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The method in accordance with claim 12, wherein said solid surface material comprises acrylic plastic and approximately between 20 and 85 percent aluminum trihydrate filler by weight.

Claim 17 (original): The method in accordance with claim 12, further comprising the step of:

f) bonding said rigidly shaped material of step (e) to another component.

Claim 18 (original): The method in accordance with claim 17, wherein said another component comprises one of the group: countertop, curb, other assembly feature.

Claims 19 - 22 (cancelled)